T-P

Defense Case Is Rested in Sirhan Murder Trial

Psychologist Says Claim Illogical But True

By ARTHUR EVERETT

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The defense rested its case Thursday in the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan — a case a psychiatrist called absurd in nature but nonetheless valid.

"The defendant rests," attorney Grant B. Cooper announced at 3:46 p.m. after a month of defense testimony concerning the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The jury of eight men and four women then was dismissed for the night. The state on Friday will begin rebuttal testimony, adding to a record already over 7,000 pages since the trial began Jan. 7.

It had been the state's intention to open rebuttal with a film of Kennedy's victory speech in the California Democratic primary, delivered only moments before and a few feet away from his assassination in Los Angles' Ambassador Hotel.

However, Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker denied the request to show the 12-minute film, saying it would be inflamatory since Sirhan in his testimony gave no indication that he heard Kennedy speak. The state said it wanted to show the film to remove any doubt in the minds of jurors that its content could have triggered Sirhan to shoot Kennedy.

The claim that Sirhan killed Kennedy while in a self-induced trance earlier was described by a defense psychiatrist as "too illogical even for the theater of the absurd"—but he called it valid nonetheless.

"To me this is a script which would never be acceptable in class B motion pictures," said Dr. Bernard Diamond, a University of California criminologist, "and yet these are, I think, the reality of the psychiatric findings."

Diamond was the final major witness in a month of defense testimony at the 25-year-old Sirhan's trial for his life for the June 5, 1968, assassination.

Testifying earlier, Diamond, 65, said Sirhan subconsciously programmed himself like a computer to shoot the New York senator, through mystic studies, self-hypnosis experiments and a festering hatred of Jews.

The defendant was said to have considered Kennedy pro-Israeli in campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In a summary, Diamond wrote: "I agree that this is an absurd and preposterous story, unlikely and incredible. I doubt that Sirhan himself agrees with me as to how everything happened."

Asked to explain what he meant by that, Diamond replied: "When I first had personal contact with Sirhan, I was prepared for the usual case of a paranoid fanatic who dreams grand illusions, and that has been what has been found to be so.

"I was not, however, prepared for what I discovered: these stirring instances of correspondence course hypnosis, dissociate trances and mystical occultims . . . and black magic, and that this, in my psychological thinking, could have resulted in the death of Sen. Kennedy, that affected the destinies of the world.

"It is my opinion that ultimately he (Sirhan) was a preposterous person and in my opinion this was the ultimate preposterous absurdity of it, too illogical even for the theater of the absurd . . . "